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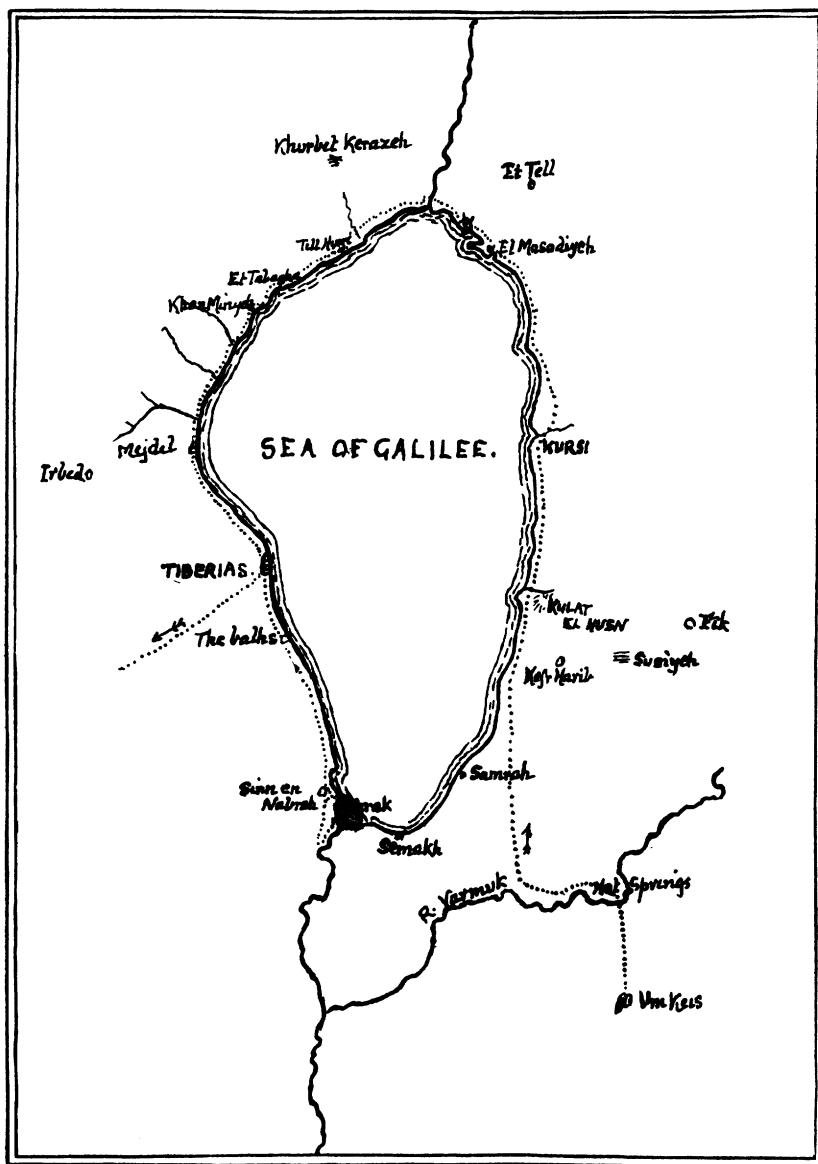
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A THREE DAYS' TOUR AROUND THE SEA OF GALILEE

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Our first glimpse of the famous and sacred lake was from the heights of Gadara, to which we had come from Irbid.¹ Here, standing on the topmost tiers of the seats of the ruined western amphitheater, we saw, irradiated by the sinking sun, one of the most charming glimpses of the lake to be found around the whole of its circuit. To our north lay the great plateau of the Jaulan—ancient Gaulanitis—with its numerous volcanic peaks, separated from us by the deep chasm of the Yarmuk far below us. Beyond the plateau the evening light was reflected on the snow-clad masses of Hermon, and somewhat to their west the long ridge of Lebanon hung like a cloud of glistening white in the extreme distance. The dark irregular heights of Galilee lay to the west, and between us and them lay a long streak of the lake, practically the whole length of its western shore. A patch in the center of the shore marked the city of Tiberias, then dark, but next morning illuminated by the eastern rays with a brilliant mass of fairy-like turrets and domes. Standing a little nearer the edge of our plateau, the brilliant green levels to the south of the lake could be clearly seen, and the village of Semak lying close to the outlet of the Jordan. Here we stood and endeavored to photograph on our memories a view which must have been a constant source of joy to those nature-loving Greeks who had erected the great street of columns, now a long row of scattered fragments, and their two amphitheaters where the view was widest of lake and mountain and plain. From far below was wafted the roar of the famous Heiromax, and in the great bend which the river here makes, amid tangled brushwood and thorn, lay the remains of the famous Amatha, a suburb of Gadara, where nature lavishly provides those hot baths which were so necessary to the Roman world.

¹ The tour here described was made in April, 1904.



We had not been many moments in our tents before the modern Gadarenes, engaged today, like most of the inhabitants of ancient sites in Palestine, in tomb-rifling, brought us handfuls of coins from the times of Gadara's glory. Here was a city's coin with ΓΑΔΑΡΕΩΝ still distinct around a cornucopia and a date which shows it was struck in 46 B. C., less than twenty years after the city had been rebuilt by the great Pompey; another coin, a biblical "widow's mite," struck by Herod the Great, recalled the fact that to him the city was given by the emperor Augustus; while the coins of numerous later Roman emperors, from Claudius to Constantine, testified to a third period when the city survived the turmoils of the Roman wars against the Jews to become in time the see of a Christian bishop. Now the miserable fellah village of Um Keis occupies much of its site, and no sepulcher of Greek noble or burgher, however securely closed, is safe from despoiling hands. Basaltic sarcophagi lie scattered on all sides, and tombs with elaborate stone doors lie open on both sides of the great Roman road that leads to the city. As moonlight illuminated the ruins, imagination peopled the streets and theaters with the crowded Græco-Roman life which flourished there at the very time when the Master was on the shores of the lake below instructing a few Jewish fishermen. What new significance such reflections give to his word, "My kingdom is not of this world"!

The next morning a steep descent of one hour, amid banks of exquisite flowers, and swarms of locusts that attended us all day, brought us to the ford of the Yarmuk. There had been heavy rain, and the water was deep. Standing at the brink of the roaring flood, it was with some trepidation that we contemplated conveying our persons and our baggage to the other shore; nor were we much encouraged by seeing a party of natives breasting the stream with its waters well up their horses' bellies, while one of the party was thoroughly wetted by his horse stumbling on the slippery, pebbly bottom. However, guided by one of the bedouin of the place, we safely crossed, and found ourselves beside the ruins of the Roman baths surrounding the steaming hot springs. My thermometer registered 117° F. as the temperature of the water. The air was full of a sulphurous smell, and the streams, as they poured down from the

large pool toward the river, deposited on their beds a yellow coating of sulphur. A few yards to the north, facing up the river, over an area which must once have been resplendent with tropical gardens, now a wilderness of undergrowth, are the remains of an amphitheater; here we sat and admired the view in which the Greeks of old must have luxuriated after their refreshing baths.

Remounting, we ascended westward along the north bank of the valley, passing two other beautiful springs of brilliantly blue-green water, steaming hot. On the plateau to our right we found a camp of many tents belonging to the engineers who are engaged in constructing the railway which is to connect the present terminus at Beisan on the west of the Jordan with Dara^{ca} on the Damascus-Hejaz railway. In the original plans it was intended to carry the line up the Wady Semak to Mezerib, the terminus of the French line, but, being unable to come to terms with the French company, the Turks have now decided to complete the whole system from Haifa to Damascus independently of the French line, and in connection with their Hejaz line, the terminus of which is to be Mecca—some day! Our route passed westward down the valley, in places on the very edge of a lofty precipice formed where a great outcrop of black basalt is cut perpendicularly to the stream-bed. A place suitable indeed, were it possible, in which to locate the incident of the Gadarene swine. Some half an hour's ride farther we turned north, leaving on our left the direct road to Tiberias by the south end of the lake. We passed between low hills which shut us off from the lake, where we were delayed for upward of an hour by a severe thunderstorm, against which it was impossible to proceed. Resuming our way with the returning sunshine, we soon passed to open ground, where the lake lay some half a mile to our left, a miserable little village called Es Samreh on its bank, surrounded deep with growing grain; to our right precipitous cliffs—the last stage of the rapid descent from the lofty plateau of the Jaulan to the deep-lying Jordan bed.

The east coast is very different from the west. Here the hills are steep along almost the whole length of the lake, and they are everywhere separated from the seacoast by a plain, which, except at one spot, is wide; a spacious and fertile land, which must once have been

in a high state of cultivation, but is now almost wholly given over to the numerous flocks of the bedouin, whose encampments dot the whole region. We were not sorry to accept their hospitable gift of fresh milk from the sheep and goats. A little over one-third of the way along the east shore we came to the first break in the range, where the remarkable hill known as Kulat el Husn (i. e., "the fortress") stands out isolated on three sides by deep valleys, and connected on the east with the main range by but a narrow neck. It is a place of extraordinary strength, and the abundant ruins on the top testify to its having been elaborately fortified. Many have located Gamala here, but the site cannot be said to fit, with any exactitude, the description given by Josephus. On the other hand, while we know of no site answering better to Gamala, this place must certainly have been a strong fortress in ancient time.² At the head of the Wady Fik, which bounds this mountain to the north, lies the squalid village of Fik, universally admitted to be Aphek;³ while a little to the southeast of Kulat el Husn, on a small plain a thousand feet above the lake, is a shapeless ruin called Sûsiyeh—a word which has no meaning in Arabic, but which preserves the Hebrew word סוּסָה, "a mare," and therefore has been generally accepted as the site of the once famous Greek city of Hippos.⁴ There can be no doubt that Hippos was near here, for we know from Josephus that it was opposite to Tiberias. Besides Fik, the only inhabited point near here is the little village of Kefr Harib high up on the edge of the cliffs just south of the three sites above mentioned.

Leaving these important points, our road skirts a small patch of inclosed and cultivated land with many fruit trees—a patch of fertility which on this wilderness shore can be seen from all sides of the lake. Another hour and we approach a point of great interest which has been described with a good deal of desire to fit facts to

² It is possible that Hippos was here. The name Sûsiyeh belongs to a site quite near.

³ Of 1 Kings 20:29, and perhaps of Josh. 12:18 and 1 Sam. 4:1. The Arabic geographers call it Afik in the Middle Ages.

⁴ In the Talmud the name of Hippos occurs in the form Susita, סוּסִיתָא, and it was called by the Arabic geographers Susiyyah. The Semitic name must have been the first; it was then translated into the Greek Ἱππος; but, as so often happens, the older name has survived.

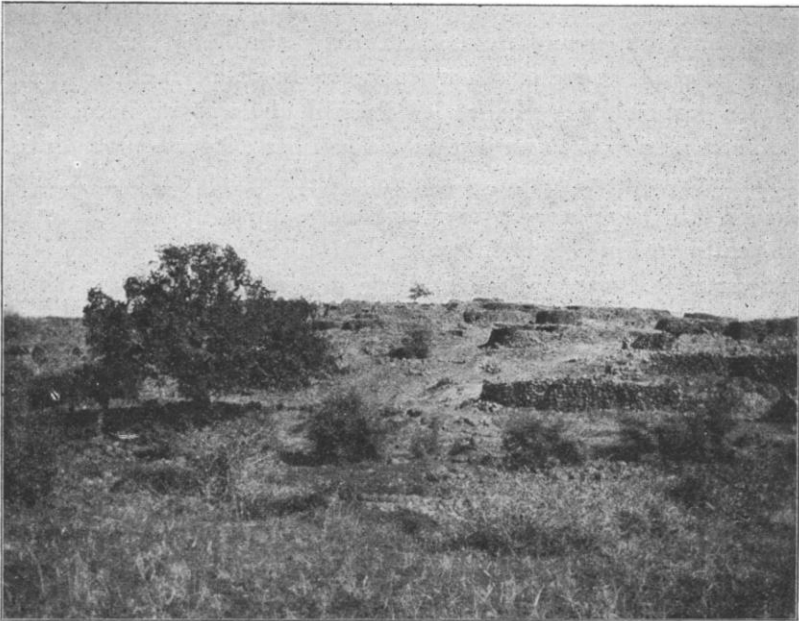
theories. As we near the mouth of the important Wady Semak, the shore narrows, and the mountains descend by a series of terraces, on the lowest slopes of which lie extensive, though shapeless, ruins, known to the Arabs as El Kursi, i. e., "the chair." These remains have, from the supposed resemblance of name, been identified as marking the site of Gergesa. I must confess I had, from written descriptions, been led to expect a much more definite "steep place down which the herd ran violently into the sea" (Matt. 8:32). It is perfectly true that there is nothing to prevent a herd of swine running violently to the sea, but there is also quite enough level ground between the base of the hills and the water to prevent their *necessarily* finding their way to the lake. The thought occurred to me: Could the level of the lake have so changed that originally the water was close to the foot of the hills here, as it is for a considerable distance on the west shore? But I think the condition of the ancient sea-walls at Tiberias makes this improbable. Many steep places that would fit the account of the wild descent exist in the neighborhood of Gadara, if only the "river" Yarmuk would do for the "sea" mentioned in the gospels.

From this spot the plain again widens out, and, turning inland, the road crosses a little stream near the mouth of the Wady Semak, and then enters the fertile and well-watered plain of El Batihah. This beautiful plain, which runs for four miles along the northeast corner of the lake, and reaches a breadth of from one to one and a half miles, is at present largely given over to marsh land, and affords a happy hunting-ground for numerous herds of buffaloes which wallow in its many pools. Toward the northern end are scattered large encampments of the Telaweyeh Arabs. Halfway along the shore there is an extensive ruin on slightly raised ground, known as El Mes'adiyah—almost certainly an ancient site, and possibly that of Bethsaida. The more commonly accepted site of this city is a low hill in the northeast corner of the plain, known as El Tell. It appears to have been an important place, and it is, as Josephus states Bethsaida Julias was, near the mouth of the Jordan, but it is rather far from the sea for, what it originally was, a fishing-village.⁵ It has even been suggested⁶ that the city consisted of two

⁵ Beth-saida = "a fishing-place."

⁶ By Schumacher.

parts, one a fishing-village near the shore, the other the well-built Roman town erected by Philip and called *Julias* after the empress. Whether there was also a *Bethsaida* on the west shore is very doubtful. A *Bethsaida* situated on this east side might have been described as being both in lower *Gaulonitis* and in *Galilee*,⁷ for the name "*Galilee*" extended also to the eastern shore of the lake. These sites in the plain of *Batīhah* might well repay excavation. The scene of the



RUIN HEAPS OF JULIAS

miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is stated to have been a "desert place belonging to the city called *Bethsaida*,"⁸ not necessarily near the city itself.

We had so far come along our route without difficulty over a road everywhere tolerable and in many places unusually good; but now our guide seemed to have gone quite astray. He should, as he afterward confessed, have led us inland, skirting the foot of the hills, that we might avoid the marshes and cross the *Jordan* some distance

⁷ John 1:44; 2:21.

⁸ Luke 9:10; these words are omitted in the R. V.

above its mouth. Instead he led us along the shore. We forded several shallow inlets, and then we followed him along a narrow strip of beach which abruptly terminated at a point surrounded on three sides by water. The wide stream in front of us we took to be the Jordan. As we approached, a girl commenced to ford the semi-circular bar at the mouth, and our guide, thus made confident, plunged in and bade us follow. When nearly halfway over, however, and some fifty feet from the land in each direction, he began excitedly shouting out to some bedouin on the shore as to the direction to be taken, and, apparently misunderstanding what was said, led us deeper and deeper in, until our legs were thoroughly wetted; then, wheeling around abruptly, he led us back the way we had come. Wet, and tired with upward of nine hours' traveling, to say nothing of the uncertainty of what lay before us in the gathering twilight, we decided to camp where we were and make the passage to the west the next morning.

So our tent was pitched close to the shore, and we watched from the tent-door processions of camels and donkeys and men splashing across the ford we had so signally failed to find, while behind our tent a herd of lowing buffaloes sauntered past and plunged into another branch of the estuary to reach the encampment of their owners on the farther shore. Ere long the last bedouin, who had brought us a bottle of buffalo milk, disappeared over the ford, and our little camp was left alone on its island. The sea in front, bathed in moonlight, gently lapped the shore, while small fires, dotting the plain behind, marked the tents of our nomad neighbors, and the frogs kept up a steady accompaniment to the occasional voices of watch-dogs, donkeys, and cattle. The next morning we passed the estuary without difficulty, and some quarter of a mile farther came across the actual mouth of the Jordan. Here the water was too deep for fording, and we had to cross in a boat, while our horses swam across beside it. After some delay, while the horses were wiped down and resaddled, we started westward. The path led through fields of grain, until after half an hour we sighted the modern wall around the remains of Tell Hum. Some two miles up a valley, to our left, lay the extensive but shapeless ruins known as Khurbet Kerâzeh, the remains of Chorazin. The site has been deserted from

before the time of Eusebius. Recently some interesting antiquities were found in the tombs around.

We visited the Franciscan property at Tell Hum, and were shown the few remaining fragments of sculptured stone which were allowed to remain uncovered. When I was here eleven years before, much more was to be seen, but the friars, for fear of the Turks claiming



RUINS OF TIBERIAS

the antiquities, have buried them. Tell Hum has perhaps the chief claim to be the site of Capernaum; for, in spite of some serious difficulties, if this was not Capernaum, what was it? The ruins, which may be traced for half a mile along the shore, and especially the remains of a splendid Jewish synagogue, point to an important city here, and we can suggest no other ancient city for this situation. Another half-hour's ride brought us to one of the most lovely spots on the whole circuit of the lake, known as Tabagha, and regarded by those who look for two Bethsaidas as the Bethsaida of Galilee. Here we have an abundant spring pouring its waters into the lake through many channels, and noticeably along a picturesque aqueduct

with a mill. A little to the right of the road is a large octagonal inclosure, in which the spring arises. This would appear to be the source of the spring mentioned in Josephus as called Capharnaum; but if Tell Hum was the city, then probably the water was conducted there by an aqueduct which has left no traces. The warm waters of the springs pouring into the lake makes this one of the best parts on the whole shore for fishing.

A little farther to the south the beautiful gardens belonging to the German Catholic Hospice testify to what may be done in this fertile region with a little careful cultivation. The hospitable head of the hospice, Father Beaver—known universally over the neighborhood as *Houri Daoud*—entertained us at lunch, while we discussed, among other things, the burning question of the site of Capernaum. He certainly seems to think Tell Hum must be the site, and, after his residence here of over twenty years, his opinion, the result of an intelligent investigation of the subject, is worth considering.

From the hospice our road led us around the rocky point which here juts out into the sea, and followed a rock-cut aqueduct, which in olden times must have conducted some of the abundant waters of 'Ain Tabagha to the plain of Gennesaret. Below us we saw the pool in which arises the abundant fountain of 'Ain et Tîn—"the fig fountain." As we rounded the point, an old Saracenic khan came in sight, known as Khan Minyeh. It lies on the long-used highroad from Damascus to the south. Sitting there at lunch on another occasion, I have counted hundreds of young camels passing from the north toward Egypt. This khan and spring mark the other spot considered by many to be the site of Capernaum. From here begins the wonderful land of El Ghuweir, universally admitted to be the land of Gennesaret. Although apparently enjoying advantages of climate very similar to other parts of the shore, there can be no doubt that the fertility of this wonderful plain is phenomenal, and the description of Josephus, so often quoted, regarding its extreme fruitfulness, was probably not greatly exaggerated. The road over the plain, which pursues a course near the shore, actually descending to the beach in places, affords a truly delightful ride. A little inland great fields of growing grain stretch to the foot of the hills, while

around one all kinds of wild flowers, comparatively scarce along the eastern shore, are abundant. Herds of cows stand browsing in the waters, and here and there a merry little brook comes out from tangled thickets of brambles and oleander, to dash across the pebbles and shells.

Only one regret mingles with the enjoyment of the scene, and that is that a land so full of latent possibilities should be left to run wild under the control of ignorant and indolent bedouin. Along the stream that flows from 'Ain Moudauwerah and Wady 'Amûd a few miles to the north, a few mills, half hidden in the low hills, alone testify to the presence of any kind of civilization.

At the end of the plain we reach the miserable hovels of the village of Mejdél, probably the Magdala whose fame is chiefly preserved to us through the Mary who came from there and is known in all the world as Magdalene.⁹ At the back of Mejdél the mountains rise imposingly into lofty cliffs eleven hundred feet high, bounding a narrow valley called the Wady Hamâm, the "valley of the pigeons," notable not only for these small birds, but also for the great griffin vultures which may usually be seen perched on its inaccessible heights. The cliffs are pierced with many caves, once the resort of robbers who were cleared out by Herod the Great by means of cages let down from the top of the cliffs. The remains of their stronghold is known as Kul'at ibn Ma'an. On the opposite, the northern, height was situated the town of Arbela of Galilee, the ruins of which, containing clear remains of a Jewish synagogue, are known by the name of Irbid.

From Mejdél less than an hour's ride takes us to Tiberias. The road, twenty to thirty feet above the lake, was very different from the level shore we had hitherto traversed in our circuit. We passed a curious isolated rock standing out some yards into the water, known as Hajar en Numl, or the "rock of the ants." The story connected with this is that for long years a colony of ants made their home on the rock; no one could say how they got there or what they lived upon; it was a miracle. One day a man put a string from the rock to the shore, upon which all the ants swarmed over to the shore and escaped, deserting the rock forever. For interfering with so great a miracle the miserable man was, the Arabs narrate, struck blind!

⁹ Many competent authorities, however, place Tarachæa here.

A little farther on, nearly halfway between Mejdél and Tiberias, is a little spring, *ʿAin el Berdeh*, with a modern mill, at present unused, and a fruit garden. Behind rise a low hill and a green, fertile valley. Here, especially on the hill, is located by some—with, I fear, slender evidence—*Dalmanutha* (Mark 8:10).

From this point the road rounds a number of bays. As we pursued it, a number of fishing-boats, with their bows piled high with nets, glided along close inshore toward the fishing-grounds in the north; the fishermen were paddling along lazily, as if they fully realized they had all day before them. The last time I had come this way, a storm had swept over this part, and great gusts of wind from the northeast had stirred a large area on the northern half of the lake into angry, white-topped waves. A large party of Spanish pilgrims who had gone in boats from Tiberias and Tell Hum were returning and, being afraid, had been landed along this shore to find their way back by land. While this end of the lake had been so stirred, the southern end appeared from the cliffs above to be quite smooth.

A last turn in the road brought the crumbling walls of Tiberias into sight, and a few minutes later we passed through the gate. We skirted the boundary of the property of the United Free Church of Scotland's Mission, and, passing the beautiful hospital, soon found ourselves under the hospitable roof of Dr. Torrance, the physician. His house is built close against the ruins of the castle of crusading times and alongside of the walls which at that period inclosed, and still inclose, the much-reduced city. Far different these from those great walls three miles in circumference which were standing in the time of Jesus Christ, the outlines of which may be still be followed. Tiberias today is but a squalid village, which, but for its mediæval fortifications, its modern mission buildings, and its surroundings, would attract no one. The inhabitants are largely Jews, for it is one of their four holy cities.¹⁰ Here the Mishna was completed about 200 A. D., and the Gemara, or "Jerusalem Talmud," some half-century later—curious facts when one remembers that, when first Tiberias was founded, it was deemed by Israelites an unclean city, because in making its foundations ancient tombs were discovered over which the city was built. Jesus seems never to have entered its limits, probably because

¹⁰ Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safed being the others.

none of his own people were there; indeed, everywhere he appears to have avoided the cities of the gentiles. Towering over the southwest corner of the ancient city, and included in the circuit of the ancient walls, was a citadel of more than common strength, on a hill connected with the mountains behind by but a narrow neck. Considerable remnants of fortifications remain to testify to what the city of Tiberias must once have been. Strange indeed it is that the only city that should have survived the ravages of time should be the one called after such a "gloomy tyrant" as Tiberius; that the place once cursed by the Jews should now be one of their holiest sites; and that the only city on that lake which is infinitely more sacred to Christians than to all others should be inhabited almost exclusively by followers of the "prophet" or rejecters of the Messiah.

There are few views of the lake more comprehensive than that from a high point in or behind the city of Tiberias. Immediately to the north are the mountains of Safed, with the land of Gennesaret lying along the shore in front. Following along the coast to the east, we have first Tabagha with its gardens; then Tell Hum, a little patch of white; and farther still the mouth of the Jordan. Above and behind this lies the special feature that dominates the view—the great snow-clad heights of Hermon. This is what from every side catches the eye and imprints itself indelibly on the memory, the suggestion at once of grandeur and eternity, of coolness and fertility.¹¹ It has been suggested that the apostle had an impress of this scene on his memory when he saw in the vision the "great white throne." Certainly, as I went around the lake with this idea deeply impressed on my mind, it seemed more than possible. If, too, this may have been the material suggestion of one thought, may not the gushing forth of the Jordan at Banias at the foot of Hermon be that of the "pure river . . . clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb"?

The view in front of Tiberias includes the whole east coast from the Batîhah on the north to the village of Semak, near the outlet of the Jordan, on the south. The great valleys of Semak and Fîk stand out prominently, and, more than all, the great hill of Kulat el Husn catches the eye. With the aid of a small telescope we made out

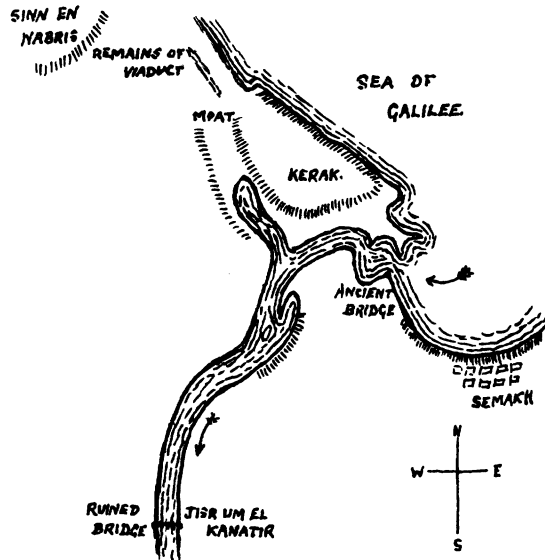
¹¹ "The dews of Hermon."

both the houses and the inhabitants of Fik and Kefr Harib, while to the southeast we saw at Um Keis a couple of travelers' tents pitched on the very spot where we had been encamped two days before in the amphitheater of Gadara. Southward our outlook was over the picturesque houses and ruins of Tiberias to the baths, but the hills shut off most of the view of the Jordan valley south of the lake.

The next morning I completed the round of the lake by riding to the exit of the Jordan. The road all the way was a good one, and was at that time being improved into a regular carriage road. About a quarter of an hour south of the city I came to the famous baths, once the seat of the town of Hamath. The most prominent building, on the highest ground, is the synagogue over the tomb of the rabbi Meyer—a reputed scene of many miracles. Some three or four insignificant buildings comprise the baths. The water rises from the ground very hot and impregnated with sulphur. People, especially Jews, from all parts of the land come here for the cure of rheumatic and other complaints. There is no doubt that, properly used, the water is distinctly beneficial. From the baths the road skirts the shore; numerous ruins are passed, but nothing very noticeable until the end of the lake is almost reached, when one observes a pretty little bay, and the road passes between a prominent hill of Tell-like appearance on the right, known as Sinn en Nabra, and a much larger and more massive hill, called Kerak, on the left. The former site is pretty certainly that of the ancient Sumabris; the latter has by many been considered that of Tarachæa. We may be sure that this site must have been an important one. The whole hill stands about twenty feet above the surrounding ground; the top is almost level, and scattered about, especially at the side, are extensive remains of old foundations. Where the area is unprotected by the lake and the Jordan, a wide and deep moat has been made, and probably once the Jordan flowed on all but the seaward side. Near the northwest corner of the hill are remains of a stone causeway which connected it with the mainland. Toward the sea, along the greater part, the cliffs fall almost sheer to the water.

Not only is the site one of great strength, but it must have been one of consequence, as it commands at least two important crossings of the Jordan; namely, that at the mouth of the river, and that of the

ford at the ruined hedge less than a mile down-stream, as well as the highroad up the west shore of the lake. Further, in times of peace no site was provided with so safe a harbor as was afforded by the now half-filled moat to the west. The city which in history seems to be most suitably placed here is Tarachæa, a city of great importance in the writings of Josephus, though unmentioned in the Bible. This place was near the lake, but easily approached from it;



EXIT OF THE JORDAN FROM THE SEA OF GALILEE

it was "washed by the sea;" it was near a plain on which military operations could take place, and not far from the mountains. It was on the west shore, and three and three-quarters miles from Tiberias. I cantered to it in a little less than an hour. Pliny states it was south of Tiberias. In the campaign of Vespasian it is stated that the Roman camp was between Tiberias and Tarachæa, at Emmaus, i. e., "the baths;" this would fit in best with the baths which, as just mentioned, today lie between Kerak and Tiberias. There are, however, it must be admitted, some serious difficulties, especially with respect to Vespasian's march to take Tiberias.¹² It is difficult to understand how he could have advanced from Beisan, i. e., Scythopolis, to

¹² Wars, Book III, chaps. ix and x.

Tiberias, having a strong fortified post in his rear. Even if we suppose, as is quite likely, that he advanced by the hills above the lake, this does not quite solve the difficulty, for he appears to have captured Suinabris on his way. Further, were Tarachæa at the very exit of the Jordan, as is the site of Kerak today, it is remarkable that Josephus, who refers to it several times, does not mention the fact. To this, however, one may reply that no city is mentioned as being situated there, whereas there can be hardly a doubt that Kerak is an ancient site of importance.

The exit of the Jordan—called by the Arabs today Bab el Tum, the “door of the mouth”—is a picturesque spot. A well-worn road across the hill Kerak leads to a ferry, but when I was there the boat was away. On the opposite side of the river is the village of Semak, standing out somewhat prominently on earth cliffs upward of twenty feet above the surface of the lake. It boasts a fair-sized new mosque. The place belongs to Arabs from north Africa, and bids fair to become one of importance, as it is planned to bring the new railway from Haifa up to this point on the lake before carrying it eastward.

In the afternoon we rode north to Mejdal to meet some friends who were coming from Safed; and the next morning, after a steep climb up the black volcanic slopes above Tiberias, past Herod's great citadel, we turned at the summit to catch one last fair view of the lake, bathed in morning sunshine, before proceeding on our way to Tabor and Nazareth. As we leave it, some last reflections force themselves to our mind. It is the most famous fresh-water lake in the world, yet in size how small it is—but thirteen miles long by six broad! It is one of the most admired, and yet what beauty it has is chiefly borrowed. One must come to it from the dry, scorched road above to appreciate the restfulness and refreshment of its blue waters; one must sail its still, hot surface to appreciate the glorious contrast of cool, snow-clad Hermon. Its outstanding features are its teeming abundance of fish life—much of it peculiar to itself; the uncertainty of its storms, which is such that sailors accustomed to the ocean have been known to dread to sail its waves; and the extraordinary doubtfulness of the sites of its once crowded towns in consequence of their utter destruction. Neither Capernaum, Bethsaida, nor Magdala of

New Testament fame are certain, while the great cities of Jewish history, Tarachæa, Hippos, and Gamala, are far from sure. All except Tiberias, itself a wreck, are hopelessly destroyed.

How great a contrast with the stillness and desolation of its shores today are the teeming multitudes of Christ's time, which thronged him so that he was glad to get into a boat for standing-room; which pursued him so that he had no time even to eat bread! How different the black bedouin tents and the cattle standing peacefully knee-deep in the waters, the only signs of life over miles of its shores, from the rush and battle of which we read in the pages of Josephus and in the chronicles of the Crusades! How sad the fact that where most the Master taught and lived and worked, where he called his first disciples and healed the sick, where most of his mighty works were done, there his name today calls forth no reverence and love, and he is now as fully rejected by the inhabitants as two thousand years ago!

And yet, with all its contrasts with the past, the decayed civilization, its lost inhabitants, its absence of his followers, what thronging memories make it a sacred spot to the Christian mind! On these shores his eyes rested when weary with the crowds of sick—the blind, the halt, the maimed; on these hills he spent all night in prayer; it was these waves he stilled with his word; on boats like these, then here in hundreds, he sailed, and it was nets like these that the fishermen, Peter and Andrew, James and John, left when they “forsook all” to follow him. To the white, pure snow of Hermon the eyes of Master and disciple were lifted when the blackness of the world's sin weighed them down. On these very shores the Master stood when the weary fishermen who had “toiled all night and caught nothing” dimly descried the form of their risen Lord; and on fish such as we eat here today the disciples had with him that mysterious meal. Into these waters Peter, conscious of his unworthiness, plunged; and here he cried the words we would fain make the language of all our hearts: “Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.”